

REMARKS

In response to the action of August 3, 2009, applicants ask that all claims be allowed in view of the amendments and the following remarks. Claims 13-15, 17-19, and 21-34 are pending, of which claims 13, 32, and 33 are independent. Claims 13, 17, 26, 28, 30, 32, and 33 have been amended. This amendment is being filed with a Request for Continued Examination.

Interview Summary

Applicants' undersigned representative thanks Examiner Abdelsalam for the courtesies extended during the interview conducted on October 14, 2009. During the interview, Examiner Abdelsalam and applicant's representative discussed the § 101 rejection and the § 103 rejection of independent claim 13. This reply reflects the substance of the interview.

Claim Objections

Claim 17 has been objected to for an informality. Applicants have amended claim 17 and submit that the amendments to claim 17 address all of the issues raised in the Office Action. Accordingly, applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of this objection.

§ 101 Rejections

Claims 13-15, 17-19, 21-31, and 34 have been rejected as being directed to non-statutory subject matter. Applicants have amended independent claim 13 as discussed in the interview of October 14, 2009. Applicants submit that the amendments to independent claim 13 address all of the issues raised in the Office Action. Accordingly, applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection.

§ 103 Rejections

Claims 13-15, 17-19, 21, 22, and 25-34 have been rejected as being unpatentable over Mahoney (U.S. Patent No. 5,563,991) in view of Guzelsu (U.S. Patent No. 6,381,587), and claims 23 and 24 have been rejected over Mahoney in view of Guzelsu and Kennedy (U.S. Patent No. 6,031,547). Based on the following remarks, withdrawal of the rejections and further examination are respectfully requested.

Referring to particular claim language, independent claim 13, as amended, recites a method comprising, inter alia, creating a shell document for a service contract that relates to services purchased by both a first independent agency and a second independent agency, posting the shell document for the service contract in a secure collaboration space within a relationship-management system to enable collaboration on the shell document by employees of the first independent agency and the second independent agency, and notifying the second independent agency that the shell document has been posted in the secure collaboration space to enable employees of the second independent agency to review and make changes to the shell document in the secure collaboration space.

Independent claims 32 and 33, although different in scope from claim 13 and each other, recite features similar to those discussed above with respect to independent claim 13.

The applied references are not seen to disclose, teach or suggest the foregoing features recited by the independent claims. In particular, the applied references fail to disclose at least posting a shell document for a service contract in a secure collaboration space within a relationship-management system to enable collaboration on the shell document by employees of a first independent agency and a second independent agency.

Specifically, Mahoney describes a system that inputs an image of a perimeter relationship representation, such as a Venn diagram, analyzes the image to identify perimeters of shapes within the image, and obtains perimeter data based on the identified perimeters. See Mahoney at Abstract, col. 1, lines 40-58, and FIG. 9. In obtaining perimeter data of an image, however, the Mahoney system does not post a shell document for a service contract in a secure collaboration space within a relationship-management system to enable collaboration on the shell document by employees of a first independent agency and a second independent agency. Rather, the Mahoney system analyzes an image to identify perimeters of shapes within the image.

Guzelsu fails to remedy the deficiencies of Mahoney discussed above. In particular, Guzelsu is directed to a system that reconciles vendor invoices for products and services with actual usage by individual users within a company. See Guzelsu at col. 3, lines 48-60, col. 4, lines 28-43, and FIG. 9. In reconciling vendor invoices, however, the Guzelsu system does not post a shell document for a service contract in a secure collaboration space within a relationship-management system to enable collaboration on the shell document by employees of a first

independent agency and a second independent agency. Instead, the Guzelsu system reconciles vendor invoices for a company without enabling collaboration on a shell document for a service contract by employees of two, different companies.

Accordingly, for at least these reasons, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of independent claims 13, 32, and 33.

The other rejected claims in the application are each dependent on these independent claims and are thus believed to be allowable over the applied references for at least the same reasons. Because each claim is deemed to define additional aspects of the disclosure, however, the individual consideration of each claim on its own merits is respectfully requested.

All of the pending issues have been addressed. However, the absence of a reply to a specific rejection, objection, issue, or comment, including the Office Action's characterizations of the references, does not signify agreement with or concession of that rejection, issue, or comment. In addition, because the arguments made above may not be exhaustive, there may be reasons for patentability of any or all pending claims that have not been expressed. Finally, nothing in this paper should be construed as an intent to concede any issue with regard to any claim, except as specifically stated in this paper, and the amendment or cancellation of any claim does not necessarily signify concession of unpatentability of the claim prior to its amendment or cancellation. Since the amendments made herein have been made solely in an effort to expedite advancement of this case, the Applicant reserves the right to prosecute the rejected claims in further prosecution of this or related applications.

No other matters being raised, it is believed that the entire application is fully in condition for allowance and such action is courteously solicited.

Please apply any charges or credits to deposit account 06-1050.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: November 3, 2009

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